

Country Friend's  
ANSWER  
TO THE  
LETTER

Addressed to him concerning  
the Settlement of a Minister  
in Aberdeen. W. James Chalmer.

*This pamphlet was published during  
the sitting of the General Assembly &  
which however disapproved of the  
course which had been taken by  
the Commission.*



*(See Note at  
the end.)*

THE

Country Friends

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TO THE

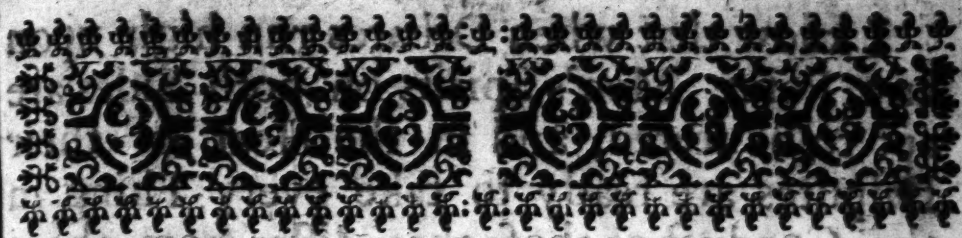
LETTER

Addressed to him, concerning  
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in Aberdeen.



W. B. BURTON & CO.





T H E  
Country-Friend's ANSWER,  
&c.

S I R,



Ours to me, concerning the Settlement of Mr. *James Chalmers* late Minister in *Dyke*, at *Aberdeen*, I have just now received; and tho' I have all due Honour and Regard for you, I could not allow myself to believe what you say of the Reverend Commission, and other Persons concerned in that Settlement, till I should have further Information, which has made me come to Town, tho' it be the Time of the Bear Seed, that I might fully satisfy myself in that Matter.



I know that when Debates run high upon any Point, Men's Spirits on both Sides are apt to be fretted, and in the Heat of their Disputes are ready to take every Thing in the Conduct of those that differ from them by the worst Handle, and therefore many Things are to be excused in such Cases, which in themselves are very blameable.

Yet I cannot justify your beginning a publick Debate in Print, about an Affair, which, you say, is to be judged by the General Assembly, tho' it be not as yet laid before them. This tends to the inflaming of Men's Minds on both Sides, and the hindering of these peaceable Measures, which, I hear, many of the greatest Note in the Assembly incline to. It is a thwarting the Design of our Assemblies, who have frequently (particularly by their Act, *Act 17. Ass. 1700*) endeavoured to discourage such Methods. It is in Effect an appealing to the Multitude for their Judgment in your Cause, e'er it come before the proper Judge, and a setting of them up as Judges in a Matter in which they have, at most, but a very remote Concern, and certainly no Title to decide in. This alone is enough with me not to justify you in addressing me in Print. But when I consider the Manner in which you treat the Commission of the late General Assembly throughout your Print,

any who pretends to own the Jurisdiction of our Church Judicatories should give himself the Liberty to load one of the most learned and venerable of them in so opprobrious a Manner.

You are pleased to represent them, *as acting in this Affair preceptantly, and even in an arbitrary and tyrannical Way, prepared before Hand, to determine in what should come before them e'er they heard the Merits of the Cause, as laughing at the Sentence and Instructions of their Constituents, as behaving ridiculously to the highest Degree, and giving Judgment always with a particular Design, without regard to Justice or our Church Constitution ;* in one Word, as being a Company either of Fools or Knaves. If these Things were true, they deserve all to be deposed, and Room made for such Men as would please you, by doing what you like. One would think that this is what you drive at ; and indeed no *Romish* Emissary could take fitter Methods to disparage our Church, and render her contemptible in the Eyes of the People, and destroy the Credit of some of her best and wisest Ministers. But (blessed be GOD) you have to do with a wise and learned Assembly, who will not be catch'd by such visible Artifices as you are pleased to use. I Hope that with such Judges the Commission will find you have done them a Ser-



if I were a Member of it, your Print would prejudice me against your Cause. Real truth needs not such Disguises and Artifices as you use. A just Cause needs no such Scorn and Scolding as yours to help it out; it needs not misrepresent and slander its Antagonist, to shew its own Beauty, nor shuffle over the Strength of its Arguments to obtain a Victory.

I shall therefore, to prevent what wrong Impressions your Print may have made upon others, and to rectify, if possible, your own Mistakes, set before you such a State of this Case as is true, and can be fully vouched by unquestionable Evidence, and make such Observations upon the Account you give of it, as are Necessary to set this Matter in a true Light.

At the last General Assembly a Call to Mr. *Chalmers* to be Minister at *Aberdeen* having come before them by an Appeal from the Synod of *Aberdeen*, it was found that that Synod had refused to sustain the Call, because the Magistrates and Town Council of the City had voted in it; and because the Votes of some contraverted Elders had not been allowed by the Session. The Party opposing the Call made likewise some Noise, that the greater Number of the Inhabitants of the Place were on their Side of the Question. The Assembly having maturely considered the Affair, passed

their Sentence in the following Terms:  
 ' That there be a new Call moderated with  
 ' all convenient Speed; and that the Magi-  
 ' strates and Town-Council, in Conjunction  
 ' on with the Elders, shall vote in the Call;  
 ' and that the Inclinations of the People,  
 ' attending Ordinances dispensed by the  
 ' Ministers of the established Church, shall  
 ' be consulted; and that a Representation  
 ' of the whole be laid before the Presbytery,  
 ' and they to proceed according to the  
 ' Rules of the Church.'

At the first Meeting of the Presbytery of *Aberdeen*, this Sentence was laid before them; and thereupon they appointed a Day for moderating in a Call from the Magistrates, Town-Council and Elders: And some following Days for consulting the Inclinations of the People in the Terms of the Assembly's Sentence. When the Day for moderating in the Call came, it appeared that the whole Town-Council, except two (who were absent, and never dissented from the Opinion of their Fellow-Counsellors) voted a Call to the Reverend Mr. *James Chalmers* Minister at *Dyke*: That of Sixteen uncontroverted Elders present, Ten voted with the Town-Council, and Six only for Mr. *Ogilvie*. A Letter was also sent from another Elder, who was absent, signifying his Inclination for Mr. *Ogilvie*: There were

their Votes for Mr. *Ogilvie*, which the Meeting refused to admit, because they were not in the Roll of the Elders given in by the Session, for Reasons which appeared to them very relevant, and which remain yet undiscussed since the last General Assembly. So that in a Meeting of the proper Electors, according to the Assembly's Sentence, there were three for Mr. *Chalmers*, to one for Mr. *Ogilvie*: Upon which the Moderators in the Call justly closed the Moderation, and allowed the Call to Mr. *Chalmers* to be signed by these who had voted for him. And they had good Reason so to do, from the constant Custom of this Church ever since the Revolution, which has always allowed a Call by the Majority of the Town-Council and Elders of a Burgh, with which no Part of the Country is joined; and from the Sentence of the last Assembly, which plainly allows an elective Voice to the Town-Council and Elders voting together, and only a consultative Voice unto the People. You are then, Sir, very much out in your Opinion, when you blame Principal *Chalmers* and Mr. *Mitchel* for attesting a Call so regularly proceeded in, and so conform to the constant Practice of this Church, and Sentence of the last Assembly, and for concluding that Meeting without consulting the Inclinations of the People, whom the Presbytery, considering their Numbers,



( 9 )  
had judged it necessary to consult on subsequent Days.

Accordingly, on the very Days appointed by the Presbytery for that Purpose, the Church Deacons, and other Heads of Families in the City, were consulted, and in the Issue of that Consultation, it appeared that of Eighteen Church Deacons there were Fifteen for Mr. *Chalmers* his Call. 2<sup>dly</sup>, That of the Heads of Families there were of Gild Brothers, including Town Council, Elders and Church Deacons, for Mr. *Chalmers*, Seventy two, who attended Ordinances dispensed by the Ministers of the established Church, and only Forty three so qualified, including Elders and Deacons, for Mr. *Ogilvie*. 3<sup>dly</sup> Of Burger Tradesmen, including Town Counsellors, Elders and Church Deacons, there were for Mr. *Chalmers* Forty eight qualified as above, and for Mr. *Ogilvie* only Thirty eight. 4<sup>thly</sup>, Masters and Doctors of Schools, and Ship Masters for Mr. *Chalmers* Nine, and for Mr. *Ogilvie* none.

5<sup>thly</sup>, Of such Inhabitants that have no Freedom in the Burgh, most of whom bear no Publick Burden there, were for Mr. *Chalmers* Thirty seven, and for Mr. *Ogilvie* Ninety three. 6<sup>thly</sup>, Of all the above Classes there were of such as have been habitual Communicants in *Aberdeen* with the established Church

Church, for Mr. *Chalmers* one Hundred, and for Mr. *Ogilvie* only Sixty Six.

'Tis true that a considerable Number of those who have no Freedom in the Burgh, and scarce bear any publick Burden in it, and several Tide-Waiters, who are not fixt Inhabitants, signified their Inclinations for Mr. *Ogilvie*; but many of them were not qualified in Terms of the Act of Assembly; yet of such is the so much boasted Majority for Mr. *Ogilvie* made up: For if we consider the Numbers above mentioned, and make a Computation upon them, it is evident, that of Communicants (who in the Account of the primitive Church were the only proper Members of a Christian Society) there is a great Majority for Mr. *Chalmers*; and that of ordinary Attendants upon other Ordinances, dispensed by Ministers of the established Church, there is no considerable Majority for Mr. *Ogilvie*, and that is made up of Persons of the least Consideration in the whole Burgh, who, tho' they are not to be despised, as being in charitable Construction Christians as well as others, yet surely are not to be most considered in the Choise of a Minister, because of the Lowness of their Education and Weakness of their Judgment in Comparison of others; especially when the Choise of the Town Council and Elders, (the only proper Electors) is against them; and so much the rather, that in the whole

Course of this tedious Enquiry, there was not so much as one Objection offered by any of the Inhabitants against Mr. *Chalmers* his Life or Doctrine, or Fitness to be Minister in *Aberdeen*, or the Regularity of the Call given by the proper Electors in his Favours.

The Commissioners appointed by the Town Council and Session, having laid this Call before the Presbytery of *Aberdeen* at their first Meeting, did reasonably expect their Approbation thereof, and Concurrence thereto : But the Party, who appeared for Mr. *Ogilvie*, insisting upon the great Majority of the People on their Side, the Presbytery thought fit to demur, whereby the Pursuers were obliged, for removing that Objection, to condescend upon a considerable Number of those who had signified their Inclinations for Mr. *Ogilvie*, that were not qualified in Terms of the Assembly's Act, *viz.* attending upon Ordinances dispensed by Ministers of the established Church, but on the contrary frequented Meeting-houses, or neglected publick Worship altogether, which they offered to prove by the Testimony of the Kirk Session, who, after particular Enquiry, had found Cause to certify so much concerning them.

And this in all Reason ought to have been allowed, seeing the Kirk Session are certainly the most fit, and indeed the only proper



Evidence in such Cases ; but the Presbytery of *Aberdeen* thought not fit to admit their Testimony, upon Pretence, that the greater Part of the Kirk Session had concurred with Mr *Chalmers* his Call : As if a Church Session were in effect to be suspended from their Office, because forsooth they had given their Votes for the Person they thought fittest to be their Minister : However the Callers, being thus disappointed in their just Expectation, craved a Warrant to cite these Persons excepted against, and Witnesses for verifying the Charge laid against them.

At the following Meeting of the Presbytery, several of the Persons excepted against being called, compeared and owned the Charge of frequenting Meeting-houses ; and others of them refusing it, the Magistrates desired that Witnesses might be examined, and particularly some of the Church Deacons ; which being objected against by the Opponents, because the Deacons were Members of the Session, and had concurred with Mr. *Chalmers*'s Call, the Presbytery took it to *Avisandum* till the next Day, and then, by a Plurality of Voices, or at least two Voices, refused to admit the Deacons as Witnesses. By this Specimen, Sir, ye may perceive what your boasted Majority of the People would have amounted to, if the Tryal had been suffered regularly to go on ; but

the Magistrates thought they had just Ground to protest, as they did, against such an unjust Sentence, and being discouraged to proceed in the Examination of other Witnesses, by this surprising Conduct of the Presbytery, and wearied with so long and frequent Attendance in vain, they applied to them, that they would please to give Judgment of the Call, as it lay before them: Whereupon Parties being removed, it was moved by some Brethren, that the Presbytery should either concur with the Call, or refer it to the Commission, who were to meet in *August* but in stead thereof they thought fit to refer it to the Judgment of the Synod, who were not to meet till the *October* following; which being intimated to the Pursuers they appealed in due Form to the Commission, judging themselves lesed by such an unnecessary and unjust Delay, and such a groundless and unreasonable Exclusion of the Testimony of the Members of the Session.

The Commission at their Meeting in *August* last, finding this Appeal duly brought before them, having heard Parties on both Sides at great Length, did sustain the Appeal upon the Grounds offered for it: And perceiving that no effectual Relief was to be expected by the Appellants, from a Presbytery who had shewed so much Inclination to shuffle off their most reasonable Desires, they resolved to take the Cause itself

before them, and to judge of the Validity of the Call, which had often been done by the Commission in like Cases before. And accordingly having caused read the Call, and heard Parties at great length *viva voce* upon the Whole of the Cause, and particularly upon the Inclinations of the People, which is so much insisted upon in this Process, they did, after long Reasoning and mature Deliberation, see Cause to sustain and approve the Call to Mr. *Chalmers*, and appointed it to be prosecuted in the usual Manner.

The Members of the Commission are more capable than I can pretend to be, to set the Grounds of this Sentence in their proper Light, as no Doubt they will do, if they be called. I shall therefore only briefly shew you what I know of the Commission's Conduct in this Point, which is the chief Hinge of the Dispute. After Parties were removed, the Members of the Commission saw plainly that the first and main Question before them was, what was mean'd by the last Assembly's Sentence, *appointing the People of Aberdeen to be consulted*. And they were all of Opinion, that consulting the People was something different from asking the Votes of the proper Electors. From which it was a very natural Consequence, that the consulting of the People gave them



been allowed them by the Rules of our Church since the Reformation : For it is certain, that the Assembly by that Part of their Sentence did not make a new Rule. This they could not do, except they had first transmitted it to the several Presbyteries for their Approbation ; and therefore the Commission could not understand that they meant any more, than to allow such Power to the People, as they had formerly, by such standing Rules, as have at any Time been established in our Church. Now that Rule, which gave them the highest Power they ever had since the Reformation, was the Act of Assembly 1649, entituled, *Directory for the Election of Ministers* ; by which all that is allowed to the People is only this, that after the Session has by a Majority of Voices made Choice of a Minister, the People shall be consulted, not to make a different Choice, which would infer absolute Confusion, but to give their Opinion of the Choice made by the Session : And the whole Matter being laid before the Presbytery, they may, tho' even the Majority of the People should be against that Choice, proceed to a Settlement, if they find that the Dissent of the People is founded only upon causeless Prejudices, as the Words of that Act plainly imply. The Commission therefore finding, by what had been laid before them in the Process, that none of the People of *Abertree* dissent

from the Call to Mr. *Chalmers*, had so much as alledged any Objection against his Life or Doctrine, or Fitness to be Minister of that Place, or the Regularity of the Call given by the proper Electors to him, and withal, that there were such a considerable Number of the most valuable Inhabitants of the Burgh, besides the Magistrates and Town-Council, as could not probably fail, if he should be transported, to make his Ministry useful and comfortable amongst them, and, together with his own Merit, cause all Opposition against him to fall soon after he should be settled, could not in Justice but sustain and approve the Call to him, and judge that the Presbytery of *Aberdeen* had without sufficient Ground refused to concur with it.

These, Sir, are the Grounds upon which the Reverend Commission gave their Sentence in *August*, against which you and your Friends do so bitterly exclaim. These Grounds you are pleased wisely to wave in your Print, being sensible, I suppose, that you could not impugn them in a Consistency with our Constitution: And therefore, from your Silence about them, in a Print wherein ye place the main Strength of the opposite Cause, I think there is good Ground to presume that the Sentence founded upon them was just. And indeed, what other Sentence could the Commission have passed, except

sembly by the Judgement which they had given in this Cause, had broke in upon the fundamental Constitution of this Church, and destroyed its Liberties, by making a new Rule about Matters of so high Moment, without first transmitting it to Presbyteries, or by making such a Rule themselves; which, if they had done, they would well have deserved all the Clamour you raise against them, and much more.

The Pursuers in the Call having this Sentence of the Commission in their Favour and their Appointment, *that it should be prosecuted in the usual Manner*, had just Ground to reckon that the Want of the Presbytery of *Aberdeen's* Concurrence was abundantly supply'd by the Judicature which the last Assembly had made their Superiours in this Cause; seeing the very Point appeal'd upon from the Presbytery of *Aberdeen*, and judged by the Commission, after a full Hearing of Parties, was, that Presbyteries refusing their Concurrence: And therefore the Sentence of the Commission, sustaining and Approving of the Call, and appointing it to be prosecuted (which is the same Thing in other Words, with *that Concurrence* of a Church Judicatory which our Forms require) was as good to all Intents and Purposes, as the Concurrence of the Presbytery could have been; so that there was indeed no Necessity of any fur-



their Application to the Presbytery of *Aberdeen*, for their Concurrence or Assistance in prosecuting this Call. Yet the Pursuers being desirous, as much as was possible, to do every Thing with Consent of the Presbytery, from Love to Peace and Harmony, at their Return to *Aberdeen* applied to the Presbytery, not for their judicial Concurrence by a Sentence to make their Call formal (this they had already by the Sentence of the Commission;) but for one or two of their Number to assist in prosecuting of the Call before the Presbytery of *Forreſs*, and they had good Reason to hope, that this would not have been refused them, both from the Equity of the Thing, and from the Encouragement which was given them by some Members of the Presbytery, who advised them to take that Measure, and promised they would be for granting their Desire. But it so happened, that by these Brethren's sudden changing of their Mind, their Desire was refused only by one Vote; and if the Moderator, who by this Means had no Place to vote, had been where any one of the Refusers was; the Pursuers are sure their Desire would have been granted by the same Majority.

This, Sir, is the Want of the Concurrence so much insisted upon by the Presbytery of *Forreſs* and you, and in this Manner was it refused. You are certainly much

to seek for an Objection against this Call, and an Excuse for the Presbytery of *Forreß* not transmitting of it according to the Order of this Church, when you make this a sufficient one, and when you judge it necessary, that the Commission, before they proceed to pass Sentence in the Transportation, should first have heard the Presbytery of *Aberdeen*, upon the Reasons of their Refusal. For the appointing of a Minister to assist in prosecuting of a Call, is no Part of the Concurrence which our Forms require. This consists in the Sentence of the competent Judicatory, (either the Presbytery or a superior Judicatory, before whom the Call regularly comes) but only a voluntary Consequence of it, which sometimes follows, and sometimes not, as we have seen in many Instances; and particularly in a late one of the Transportation of the Reverend Mr. *John Hepburn*, from *Torieburn* to *Edinburgh*, where the Presbytery of *Edinburgh*, tho' they had concurred with the Call, and were desired to assist in prosecuting of it, yet did not send any of their Number to assist in the Prosecution; and yet the Presbytery of *Drumfermling*, who I suppose were at least as desirous to keep Mr. *Hepburn* amongst them, as the Presbytery of *Forreß* were to keep Mr. *Chalmers*, made this no Objection against transmitting of the Call, and judging

in the Cause. But whatever Defect was in this Case, thro' the Want of such Assistance from the Presbytery of *Aberdeen*, I cannot but think it was happily enough made up by a Commission, given by the Pursuers to the Reverend Principal *Chalmers* and Mr. *Bisser*, both Ministers within the Bounds of the Presbytery, to insist with their other Commissioners in this Process. But so strangely are Men's Minds turned, that they are ready to complain of that as a Fault, which is really a Duty; for in this Case, I hear, that the giving a Commission to these Reverend Brethren, and their accepting of it, is blamed by some as irregular. But is there any Thing absurd or irregular in a Minister's being employed in such a Case, more than an Advocate or a Writer? Are the Ministers of *Edinburgh* to be blamed for their Accepting of Commissions from the Town Council and Session of the Burgh (which they ordinarily do) for prosecuting their Calls to a Minister? Was the Reverend Mr. *William Mitchel*, present Moderator of the Assembly, to blame for accepting of a Commission from the *Scots* Congregation in *Rotterdam* (which he did once and again) to insist for the Transportation of the late Reverend Mr. *Robert Baillie* to that Place? If he was to blame, the Assembly, who without Difficulty allowed his Compearance, were in the Fault.



If he was not, the Town of *Aberdeen*, and the two Brethren above-mentioned, were also blameless, and the Commission cannot be complained of for allowing their Appearance. But I have been too long upon so plain a Point.

The Pursuers finding themselves thus unkindly used by their own Presbytery, were justly of Opinion, upon the Grounds above-mentioned, that they might go on in Prosecuting of their Call in the ordinary Manner, without their Assistance. But when they came to the Presbytery of *Forreſs*, that Reverend Judicatory thought fit to refuse the Transmission, upon Pretence that there were some Informalities in the Commissions of some of the Pursuers, and because the Call wanted the Concurrence of the Presbytery of *Aberdeen*. Whereupon the Pursuers having brought the Matter before the Synod of *Murray* by an Appeal, that Reverend Synod thought fit to refer it to the Commission for their Advice, upon these two Points on which the Presbytery of *Forreſs* had demurred, appointing withal, that that Presbytery should follow such Directions as the Commission should give them. The Pursuers, upon what they had formerly met with, being jealous that this Reference might produce further Delays, and apprehending that it put their Cause upon a wrong Footing, by implying that

they were again to come before the Presbytery of *Forreſs*, who they thought had not uſed them very kindly, appealed from this Reference to the Commiſſion; And ſo the Affair came undetermined a ſecond Time before the Commiſſion in *November*, both by a Reference from the Synod of *Murray*, and an Appeal by the Purſuers.

The Commiſſion, upon hearing of Parties, finding that the main Thing deſired by the Purſuers was, that their Call might be tranſmitted with all Diſpatch (which had indeed been too long delayed) did chiefly apply themſelves to conſider of that Point; and by their Sentence did find, that there was no Reaſon to reject the Commiſſions of the Purſuers for their alledged Defects, and that the Want of the Concurrence of the Presbytery of *Aberdeen*, was not ſufficient Ground for the Presbytery of *Forreſs* to reſuſe the Tranſmiſſion of the Call; and therefore, without determining the Queſtion about the ſaid Concurrence, ſo as to imply any general Deciſion about the Neceſſity of the Concurrence of Presbyteries with Calls, did judge, that without any ſuch Deciſion on the Part of the Commiſſion, that Presbytery ſhould, without any farther Delay, tranſmit the Call to the Pariſh of *Dyke*, and give Judgement in the Transportation, leaving always to them to conſider of what Weight the Want of the ſaid Concurrence

was, when they come to judge of the Reasons of Transportation ; which was a pointed enough Answer to the Presbytery of *Forreſs* Doubt.

Here, Sir, you are pleased to fly out againſt the Commiſſion, as if they had determined the very Point, which they did not find neceſſary to determine, and conſequently make them to paſs a Sentence either inconfiſtent or diſingenuous, to ſave themſelves the Deciſion of a tickliſh Point ; and yet, at the ſame Time, oblige the Presbytery of *Forreſs* to proceed, as if they had determined it. But the Commiſſion were ſo far from dealing inconfiſtently or diſingenuouſly with the Parties concerned, that by their Sentence they gave not an ambiguous Answer, as you call it, but a very plain one, to the Queſtion propoſed to them in the Caſe before them, as you may ſee by what is juſt now ſaid : And this was not at all inconfiſtent with their thinking that it was not neceſſary for them to determine the Queſtion, as to the Concurrence of Presbyteries with Calls in general.

This Sentence of the Commiſſion, one would think, ſhould have determined the Presbytery of *Forreſs* at laſt to tranſmit the Call ; for whatever they may pretend that their Doubt ſtill remained, no impartial Man will think that they could warrantably reſuſe to obey the Orders of their Superiors,



in a Thing so plainly within their Power, when applied to by their Synod for Advice therein, and when, as you your self confess, the Commission had determined the very Point in Question.

The Commission, Sir, are bound to you for the Excuse you are pleased to make for them for passing this Sentence, but the Presbytery of *Forres* much more, for saying that they were not blinded by it; that Presbytery in your Account was, no Doubt, much wiser than the whole Commission, and had a Light from superior Luminaries, which the Authority of the poor Commission could nowise darken; and therefore, without thinking fit to obey their Superiors, as our Constitution and the Order of our Church requires, they thought fit flatly to refuse Obedience, and to refer the Matter back entire to the Commission in *March*. Can any Man, Sir, besides your self, think, that such irregular Proceeding was without any partial Design, and that it was not intended entirely to elude any Decision from the Commission in this Affair. The Commission in *March* was the last quarterly Meeting before the Assembly; and 'tis natural to think, that they reckoned that by this Delay of Judgment, they would put it wholly out of the Commission's Power, to redress the Injury which they had done to the City

They were to be convinced that of

of *Aberdeen*, and oblige them to drop their Prosecution of this Call.

You cannot then think it strange, that the Pursuers made Use of their Right, which they had, by the Reference of the last Assembly, by appealing to the Commission for Redress of such an injurious and abusive Delay : And when their Appeal came before the Commission, any seeming Informality which was in it appeared so little, that there was scarce any of their keenest Opposers, who had the Confidence to propose rejecting it upon that Account. For the whole Matter, for which you judge the Appeal utterly informal, was only this, that the Moderator of the Presbytery of *Forreß*, being at a considerable Distance from the Appellants, when they drew up their Reasons of Appeal ; and the Clerk of that Presbytery (a Minister of their own Number) being occasionally upon the Place with them, they lodged the Moderator's Copy of their Reasons with him, upon his written Receipt and Promise, that he should deliver it within ten Days after the Appeal: But he having been hindered by some unforeseen Events, could not deliver it till the thirteen Day, which he then did in Presence of the Presbytery under an Instrument, as appeared to the Commission in *March*, by a Letter under his Hand. The Presbytery of *Forreß* were so far convinced of the Weak-

ness of this Objection, that (tho' Mr. *Square* their Moderator did not think fit to receive his Copy of the Reasons of Appeal, yet) they made Use of the Clerk's Copy for drawing up their Answers, and compeared by their Lawyers to defend their Sentence, who it seems took effectual Care to publish their Answers, for they were printed before the Commission had Time to enter upon the Cause; so that the End of giving in Reasons of Appeal, *viz.* That the Judicatory appeal'd from may have an Opportunity to defend themselves, was fully answered. I think then, Sir, I may safely appeal to your self, if you are not blind-folded by Prejudices, whether the Commission received this Appeal in Spite of the Act of the Assembly, as you are pleased to assert, or if the impartial Part of the World would not have judged, that if they had done otherwise, they would have acted contrary to the Design of that Act, and injured the Pursuers in their Cause for a very small Fault of the Clerk of the Presbytery of *Forress*, for whose Conduct they were no Way answerable.

After sustaining the Appeal, the Commission, at this Meeting, seeing that it was the Intention of such as opposed this Call, to elude it entirely by affected Delays, and rather to take any Course that could serve that End, than to proceed straightly according to the plain Rules of our Church;



and Considering that the Design of the last Assembly's Reference to them, finally to decide in all Questions relating to the Planting of the Vacancy in *Aberdeen*, naturally imported, that they should terminate that Process before the Meeting of the next Assembly, judged it their Duty, rather than suffer the Design of the Assembly's Reference to them to be disappointed by bare-faced Craft, to appoint a Meeting *in hunc effectum*, on the 30th of that Month; and to order the Citation of the Minister and Parish of *Dyke* before themselves against that Diet, with all the Formalities which are required in such Citations. The Citation was given full seventeen Days before the Diet of Compearance, which was sufficient Time, in all Reason, for any Party concerned to prepare what they had to offer against the Transportation, before Sentence should be passed. The Body of the Parish, were upon the Place, and had Time enough to prepare Answers to the Reasons of Transportation, and repair to that Meeting of the Commission, if they so thought fit: And I am well informed, that the good People there very ingenuously transmitted Materials for Answers unto their Friends in this Place, to be made Use of as they should see needful: But that these Trustees did not think fit to make Use of them, but on the contrary, to object against the Commission's

Proceeding in that Cause at that Time, upon Grounds plainly impugning the former Sentences.

As to the Right Honourable the Earl of Murray, and the Laird of Brodie, for whom the Commission, no Doubt, had all due Regard, there could be no Apprehension that they, who have their Doers in that Country, and at *Edinburgh* also, with general Instructions for managing their Affairs, would fail to represent what was judged for their Interest upon seventeen Days Advertisment, especially in a Cause which they could not but know had been in Dependence for near nine Months before. A Meeting of the Commission, Sir, appointed for such Reasons, cannot be justly called, as you are pleased to call it, *remedium extraordinarium*, seeing it has been often practised: But if an express Power be sufficient for using extraordinary Remedies, the Commission have it by their Instructions, which bear that they have full Power to appoint other Meetings besides their quarterly ones, as often as they shall think fit, and in their Judgment this Meeting *in hunc effectum* was thought reasonable; and tho' ye are pleased to say that this Appointment destroyed all Order, I hope few will be of your Opinion; for tho' this implied, that the Presbytery of *Aberdeen's* not sending some of their Number to assist in prosecuting of the Call, was no Nullity in it,

it did not imply that the private Parties, without Warrant from a competent Authority, might transmit the Call to another Presbytery, seeing the Commission had fully supplied what was wanting by the Presbytery of *Aberdeen's* Non-concurrence. And that the Presbytery of *Forres* and Synod of *Murray* were by this Sentence deprived of their Power of judging in the Transportation, could be no Fault in the Commission, since the Presbytery of *Forres* by their own unjust Delays and shuffling, had made it necessary that they could not judge in the Affair. And as to the Synod of *Murray*, they were no more deprived of their Power of judging in this Cause, than they would have been, if the Presbytery of *Forres* had given Sentence in it before the Quarterly Commission in *March*. Pray then, Sir, Where is that Sketch which you cannot but repeat, that would have been in an Assembly in this Case? And wherein can the Commission be blamed for this Step, who had the Assembly's Power lodged with them?

When the 30th of *March* came, the Commission convened very throng, but were so far from being of the *Magistrates* Party, as you represent them; Of the the Commission's Party how could they be? For how can a Court be distinguished from itself? (But 'tis no rare Thing to hear a Man speak Nonsense when he is Rolding.) That to



my certain Knowledge some of the Magistrates were apprehensive, after they had come to Town upon that Meeting, that the Majority of the Members of the Commission would be against them. Whatever might be the Reasons which kept the Heritors and People of *Dyke* from comparing on this Occasion to keep their Minister, 'tis certain they had no just Ground to complain for Want of Time to answer, as has been above shewed. And the Heads of Families in *Aberdeen*, Dissenters from Mr. *Chalmers* his Call, had no Injustice done them by refusing to hear their Petition read, seeing in this the Commission did nothing but what was conform to the Practice both of Assemblies and Commissions in parallel Cases, as was made evidently to appear in the Course of their Debate ; so that if there was any Thing *ridiculous*, it was not in the Commission, but in those who so groundlessly complain of them.

At this Meeting the Commission having heard Parties at length upon the whole Affair which lay before them, and after hearing the Reverend Mr. *Chalmers* himself, who did not (as you affirm) declare, that he would be glad of the Exchange of *Dyke* for *Aberdeen*, but modestly, and as became a Man of his Character, signified his Willingness to submit to the Sentence of the Reverend Commission whatever it should be. And

upon the whole, the Commission, after Prayer to GOD for Counsel and Direction in so weighty an Affair, and after full Reasoning and mature Deliberation upon it, did, from the Consideration of the great Disproportion betwixt the two Charges of *Dyke* and *Aberdeen*, of the long Vacancy which had been in that City, the great Trouble and Charges which they had been put to for supplying that Vacancy, and of the good Character of the Reverend Mr. *Chalmers* himself, whose Piety, Prudence, Learning, and other good Qualifications, make him fit beyond many to exercise the Ministerial Office in that City, transport him from *Dyke* to *Aberdeen*, and appointed him to be admitted upon the Twenty first Day of *April* thereafter by the Presbytery of *Aberdeen*, and such of the Members of the Commission as were Ministers within the Bounds of the Synod of *Aberdeen* and Presbytery of *Fordon* the nearest Places of the adjacent Country.

This Precaution was reasonable, to prevent the Disappointment of the Commission's Sentence, which it was justly apprehended the Presbytery of *Aberdeen* would not be ready to obey, because of their Behaviour in this same Process before. And why the Commission, who have the Assembly's Power in Things referred to them, may not do that which Assemblies, Synods, and Pres-

byteries do every Day, viz. to appoint some of their own Number to see to the Execution of their Sentences in Places under their Jurisdiction, I cannot understand.

As to your Objection, which you insinuate with some Diffidence, as if your self suspected it was not good, that *delegatus non potest delegare*, if it were stretched to its full Extent, it would exclude our Assembly, which is but a delegated Court from the several Presbyteries, Universities, and Burghs, in the Church, from subdelegating a Commission, which will very well answer your worthy Design, that you hint in the Beginning of your Paper, of our Church's being without a Commission altogether. But forgive me, Sir, to tell you, that if it is your Design to suppress Commissions of the General Assembly, which have always subsisted in our Church since the Reformation, you have spoke it out a little too soon, which I hope will hinder it to be successful. For I know that there are many wiser Men than either you or I, who think that the Commission is the great Bulwark of our present Church Constitution; and if that Court were abolished, our present Church Government would soon follow after it. Besides this, Synods and Presbyteries are in Part delegated Courts, and this pretended Law-maxim of yours would ty up their Hands, from doing any Part of their Business by de-



legating some of their own Number, which is directly contrary to our constant Practice ; And yet after all I think I may adventure to submit it even to yourself, whether the Practice of the Commission has been contrary to this your Law-maxim, seeing they did not appoint any Committee to judge of the main Question in the Affair committed to them, but only appointed some of their Number to see to the Execution of their Sentence, in Conjunction with the Presbytery of the Bounds.

Which leads me, Sir, to the concluding Part of your Letter, relating to the conjunct Meeting of the Presbytery of *Aberdeen*, and the Correspondents from the Commission. The Truth of the Matter, as I am well informed, stands thus ; After the Presbytery of *Aberdeen* had been twice solemnly advertised, in the Terms of the Commission's Appointment, once in their Presbyterial Meeting, on *Monday* the 4th Day of *April*, and again in the Synod the Day following, to meet in the Session-house with the saids Correspondents, to concert Measures for the Admission of *Mr. Chalmers* ; On *Wednesday* the 6th of *April* they did accordingly meet, at the Hour and Place appointed ; and the Meeting being constitute by the Moderator of the Presbytery, the Sentence of the Commission was read, the Correspondents were called, and being

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for the most Part present, they were inrol-  
led ; which in all Reason ought to be con-  
structed an admitting of them to act in Con-  
junction with the Presbytery ; yet after this,  
some of the Members of the Presbytery be-  
gun to move a Question, Whether they  
should be allowed to sit and act with them  
or not ? And perceiving that the Majority  
of the constituted Meeting would be against  
them, in their Design to exclude the Cor-  
respondents, they whispered to the Mode-  
rator to adjourn the Presbytery ; who,  
without asking the Mind of the Meeting, or  
even of the Members of the Presbytery,  
did, at his own Hand, take it upon him to  
adjourn the Presbytery. Against which,  
when some of the Brethren of the Presbyte-  
ry present, and Correspondents offered a  
Protest, he, to silence them, presently pray-  
ed ; Which, Sir, in my humble Opinion,  
was more than any Moderator is by our  
Constitution warranted to do ; and was in  
the most effectual Manner assuming a Ne-  
gative upon his Brethren. How he can  
answer for this is more than I can tell. That  
the Provost of *Aberdeen* did threaten the  
Moderator in a Manner very like break-  
ing the Peace, or that any of Mr. *Chalmers*  
his Friends held up a Cane to him in a  
threatning Way, as you are pleased to assert,  
is absolutely denied by those concerned.

mers was so intent upon taking Protests and Instruments in the Time of the Moderator's Prayer, as not at all to mind it, is likewise absolutely denied by the Reverend Person said to be meant. And if any of these alledged Indecencies or Disturbances shall come before the Assembly by Way of Complaint, they will be glad of that Opportunity to vindicate themselves to the Assembly, and all impartial Judges.

After the foresaid Prayer, the Moderator and some of the Presbytery withdrew in a Manner somewhat Precipitant; for tho' they thought fit thus to depart from the Presbytery, they could not carry alongst with them the Clerk who stayed with the conjunct Meeting; nor did they offer any Protest against the Correspondents sitting with them. It seems they had no Grounds, able to bear the Light, for supporting their irregular Practice. No Wonder then if the remaining Members of the Presbytery, (who by the by, including ruling Elders, were the major Part of it) with the Correspondents, proceeded to do the Work committed to them; and therefore having desired the Reverend Brother, who had been Moderator of the Presbytery last before, to take the Chair, they proceeded to their Work; and having appointed an Edict to be served in due Form, which yet was not necessary by our Rules in such a Case, they met again *Ap. 1*



21st, the Morning before the Admission, to receive the Return of it, and found that the Edict had been duly served in the Terms of their Appointment ; and it being called at the most patent Door of the Church, there was no Objection offered against Mr. *Chalmers* his Life or Doctrine, (which in such a Case is the only Subject of Objection :) Only a Paper was read and given in under Instrument by one of the Elders, insisting upon the pretended Nullities in the Commission's last Sentence, and their other Procedure in this Affair, and protesting against the Meeting's proceeding to the Admission. But the Meeting finding that such a Protestation was no legal Obstruction, according to the Rules of our Church, against their Proceeding to the Settlement of Mr. *Chalmers* ; for besides, that it contained nothing against his Life and Doctrine, it was signed only by the Person who offered it and four Elders more, without any Commission from others. And notwithstanding the so much boasted Numbers against Mr. *Chalmers* his Settlement, and that this Protest was taken in open Presbytery, there were not above Six or Seven of the Heads of Families who adhered to it. And it is well known, that severals of the Elders and Heads of Families, who had declared for Mr. *Ogilvie* before, had been with great Importunity desired to join, but refused it. It seems these honest

our Church, their private Opinion was overruled by the proper Authority to which they were bound to submit. Happy were it for our Church, if all private Christians of our Communion were of the same peaceable Spirit. The Presbytery therefore, with their Correspondents, did without regard to this Protestation proceed to the Admission of the Reverend Mr. *Chalmers*: At which the Reverend Principal *Blackwell* preached and presided; and I am well informed by Persons present, that the Congregation was very throng, not only with such as had declared for Mr. *Chalmers*, but even with many of those who had been for another, who, in stead of shewing any Signs of their Dissatisfaction, or making any Disturbances, did behave themselves in a very grave and orderly Manner; and many, who had lived long in that Place, declare they had never seen any Admission in that City performed in a more frequent Congregation, or in a more edifying Manner.

The Settlement thus made, I can assure you, Sir, has been countenanced in a Manner, which, after so much Opposition, both here and there, could scarce have been expected; for since ever Mr. *Chalmers* began to exercise his Ministry at *Aberdeen*, his Audience has been full as throng as that of any Minister in the City: Many of the Dissenters from his Call of different Ranks,

have regularly attended upon his Ministry, both on Sabbath Days and Week Days, and severals of them have paid him Visits, and invited him to their Houses. Of those who thought fit to stand neutral, and had, during the Process, never declared either for him or Mr. *Ogilvie*, there are to the Number of Seventy Heads of Families, some of which are Magistrates, who have regularly attended upon the Ordinances dispensed by him since his Admission; and many others, both Elders of the Congregation and Members of the Presbytery, who, during the Dependence of the Process, were against his Settlement, have declared, that if this Assembly shall approve thereof, they will heartily acquiesce therein, particularly his two Colleagues Mr. *Campbell* and Mr. *Osburn*.

You see then, Sir, that the Opposition to that Settlement is already very much fallen; and that if it had not been for the Dissents which have been entred in the Commission, and the Advices sent from *Edinburgh*, it would have altogether ceased e'er now, there being nothing in the Nature of the Things sufficient to uphold it; and even as it is, if this Assembly shall be directed of GOD (as I hope they shall be) to approve what the Commission has so justly and regularly done, Mr. *Chalmers* his Ministry at *Aberdeen* will readily be submitted to by all the People



of our Communion there. Mr. Ogilvie, whom severals inclined to rather than to Mr. Chalmers, because of their being acquainted with him, is now transported and admitted to *Insbtoury* in the Presbytery of *Dundee*; and so the Bone of Contention is out of the Field. Mr. Chalmers is a Person of such Piety, Learning and Prudence, and such an edifying Gift of Preaching, as cannot fail to recommend him, so soon as he shall be known, to the Esteem and Affection of all under his Charge; and therefore, no Ground of Opposition or Difference remaining, 'tis justly to be hoped, that the Inhabitants of *Aberdeen*, who are of our Communion, shall be as much one with him, as with any other that could be settled amongst them; and that he may, by the Blessing of GOD, be happily instrumental in reclaiming some who separate from us. I hear 'tis said, that in that Quarter, which falls to be under his Inspection, there are but few Families who will submit to his Ministry: But upon Enquiry I am well informed, by such as exactly knew the Place, that the quite Contrary is true; and that in that Quarter there are Ten or Twelve Heads of Families, severals of them of considerable Note, who have subscribed his Call, and that as some of the rest have already, so others will be brought very soon

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to submit to his Ministry, as much as they do to any other Minister in the City.

Thus, Sir, I have followed you through the Tract of your Narrative of this Affair, and gone a little further in the History of it, than you have thought fit to do. I have advanced no Facts, but such as I either certainly know, or am very credibly informed of; and if any of them be called in Question, they can be made appear to be true before the General Assembly. I have not returned upon you your virulent Language, which I might easily have done, if I had been so minded; nor have I advanced calumnious Stories upon Hearsay, against those who are of a different Opinion from me, (tho' you have thought fit to take that Liberty) judging, that such unfair Methods are unworthy of an honest Man; and that the learned and prudent Members of the General Assembly will not be imposed upon by such Artifices. If I have omitted to obviate any of your Arguments, I can assure you it is not from any Conviction I have of their Strength, but purely from Inadvertency; for I am persuaded that nothing you have said can bring any impartial Man, who truly knows the Matter, to be of your Opinion.

I might now conclude this Letter, which I acknowledge has been too long upon a Subject in itself so plain, if yours to me had not perplexed it: but being desirous that



the Case as it stands should be thoroughly known, I have ventured to trespass so far upon the Patience of such as shall read this, that, if possible, they may be undeceived of all their Mistakes.

And for the same Reason, I shall, before I conclude, offer a few Observations, which may serve to enlighten the Subject in Question betwixt you and me.

One Thing is visible, That in this whole Affair the Opposers of Mr. *Chalmers* his Settlement have been acted by other Motives than a Concern for having the Vacancy in *Aberdeen* comfortably planted with a fit Gospel Minister: For, as none ever objected against Mr. *Chalmers* his Fitness to be Minister there, so severals of those who have appeared most warmly against his Call and Settlement, did some Years before the Vacancy declare their high Esteem of him, for his Preaching Gift, and other ministerial Qualifications. What should have induced such Persons to change their Mind? Was it any Change in Mr. *Chalmers* his Abilities or Behaviour? No surely, He is still in his Vigour; his ministerial Abilities as bright as ever, and his Character blameless. We must therefore look out for some other Reason of these People's Conduct; and another doth plainly offer it self, from the Differences about Civil Matters in the Town-Council of *Aberdeen*. Some Persons who



were displeased with the Choice of Magistrates and Counsellors made there at the *Michaelmas* immediately preceeding the Vacancy, have, perhaps, because some of themselves and their Friends were left out in that Choice, it seems resolved to distinguish themselves, by opposing the Measures of the Magistrates and Town-Council, who were chosen against their Will, and therefore connecting their own Designs with others of a more publick and extensive Nature, have, from the Beginning of this Affair, warmly opposed a Call to Mr. *Chalmers*, whom the Magistrates and Town-Council inclined to, and set up for one to Mr. *Ogilvy*, chiefly upon Pretence that the Inhabitants were better acquainted with him. They used their utmost Interest in the Town, in the Presbytery, and Synod of *Aberdeen*, to baulk the Magistrates and Town-Council in their Design: And having the Advantage of that adventitious Assistance from a superior Influence, prevailed so far as to procure very uncommon Steps to be taken in all these different Societies, which much perplexed a very plain Matter before the last General Assembly, where they also had the Interest to get the first Call to Mr. *Chalmers* laid aside, and another appointed to be moderated in, with a Direction of which, it seems, they hoped to make their Advantage. After this, the Town-Council and Session having

again pitched upon Mr. *Chalmers*, as the fittest Person to supply their Vacancy, their Opponents could not acquiesce in their Choice; but still animated with the same Design of opposing the Magistrates and Session, took Hold of the Clause in the Assembly's Sentence, which seemed to favour them, to raise all that Bustle which has been above narrated; and had not the Commission of the late Assembly made a Stand for Justice to the Callers, and for maintaining the present Constitution of our Church against Innovations, they fancied, and perhaps not without some Ground, they might have carried their Design in Opposition to both. But pray, Sir, were the Commission to be bullied out of their Duty by such Noise and Clamour as were raised upon such Grounds? Or can they be blamed for understanding the Assembly's Sentence agreeable to our Constitution, and giving their Sentences for the Maintenance of the just Right of the Town-council and Session of *Aberdeen*? Were they to concern themselves in the political Differences betwixt the Town-council and their discontented Opposers? Were they to reject a Call which was valid according to the Rules of our Church ever since the Reformation, merely because some designing Men who were displeased with it had stirred up some noisy Opposition against it? No, Sir, I hope you your self will not affirm that



they ought. This, Sir, is my first Observation.

You may please next to take Notice, That the Dissents which were entered in the Commission against two different Sentences of that Court, the one in *August*, the other in *March*, gave but very little Ground for the Assurance with which these Sentences are exclaimed against. The Dissenters, whom you are pleased to call *Honourable and Reverend Members*, and sometimes the *more thinking Part of the Commission*, were for the most Part Ruling Elders, whose Names will be read, if the Matter come before the Assembly. In the Dissent in *August* there are sixteen, four of whom only are Ministers, and the Dissent was entered by a Ruling Elder, and not adhered to at the Time of entering it, by some of the few Ministers who afterwards subscribed the Reasons of it. The Dissent in *March* is only by Eight, of whom there are but two Ministers; and I am well informed, that the Reverend Brother, who first entered that Dissent, was solicited to it by a Ruling Elder, and not without some Difficulty prevailed upon to do it, and had his Instrument Money given him by that Ruling Elder before he entered the Dissent. By all which, Sir, you may judge, whether these Dissents were entered chiefly to keep up an Opposition to this Settlement, upon Grounds extrinick to the



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Good of the Church, or to exoner the Con-  
sciences of the Dissenters, and to save them  
from sharing in the Commission's Censure  
at the Assembly, which are the only two al-  
lowable Grounds of entering Dissents accor-  
ding to our Rules. And indeed the enter-  
ing Dissents in a supreme Judicatory of the  
Church seems to savour of a factious and  
divisive Design, especially when they are  
over-ruled by so great a Majority as was in  
this Case; for in the Commission in *August*  
there were at least two to one, and in the  
Commission in the End of *March* the Trans-  
portation was carried by Forty five against  
Eleven, of which Eleven there were only four  
Ministers. If then Presumptions are to deter-  
mine any Man, do you think, Sir, that the  
Presumption lies on your Side of the  
Question.

A third Observation, Sir, which you may  
please take alongst with you, is, That tho'  
you are pleased to say, that those who re-  
monstrated against the Commission's Sen-  
tence in *March* at their Quarterly Meeting,  
were of the wisest and best of their Mem-  
bers, I do not remember of any Remon-  
strance made by any Member of the Com-  
mission at that Meeting, otherwise than by  
reasoning and giving his Voice. But I must  
beg leave, Sir, to observe, that this Way of  
Talking of Wisdom and Goodness in partic-  
ular Members in Comparison with one ano-

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ther, it not so agreeable to that Civility  
which becomes a Gentleman. But since you  
are pleased to talk in that Strain, I shall be  
free to tell you, that whatever was the Me-  
rit of such Members as differed from the  
Commission on that Occasion, there were o-  
thers of no less Wisdom and Integrity a-  
mongst these who made the Majority. And,  
tho' you are pleased to represent those who  
made up that Majority, as a *Set of Men, who  
went through Stitch, and swallowed down every  
Thing they heard, to the Shame of our Judicato-  
ries, the Offence of Bystanders, and the Diversion  
of our Enemies,* I hope there is no impartial  
Man who will be of your Opinion. I am well  
assured, that the Enemies of our Church re-  
joyced when they heard of those Dissents,  
being glad of any Thing which brought a  
Tash upon the Commission, which is, and  
ever since the Revolution, has been one of  
their greatest Eye-sores ; and I am very con-  
fident, that the Bystanders of our Commu-  
nion would take no Offence at the Commis-  
sion's ordering the Settlement of a Minister,  
in a Way agreeable to the Rules which have  
always been in use in this Church since the  
Reformation. And I cannot but hope that  
so wise and learned an Assembly will be  
firm to these Rules for settling of Vacancies,  
which have always obtained amongst us since  
the late happy Revolution, and were approved  
by the old Ministers and Members of this

Church, who had long Experience of former Times, and have much contributed since that happy Time to preserve the Peace and Safety of this Church. And now, Sir, to conclude this unpleasant Subject, I cannot think that the Question is as you state it, *Whether the last Assembly's Appointment, or the Commission's Sentence shall stand? Which shall have the greatest Authority, the Constituent or the Delegate?* But whether the Settlement of a Minister, according to the Rules of this Church, by Direction of the Commission, fully impowered by the last Assembly finally to judge in that Matter, should be approved by this Assembly, and such a Settlement confirmed by them, or not? This, Sir, is the true State of this Question; and I hope the Members of this Venerable Assembly will not be so far misled by your partial Print, as to mistake the true State of it, or to come in to your Proposal, with which you conclude, *That the Assembly should reverse this Settlement at Aberdeen, as was lately done in the Case of Mr. Carlile's Settlement at Lochmaben.*

It would have been a great Injustice, as Things then stood, not to transport Mr. Chalmers to Aberdeen: But now that he is settled there, it would be a double Injustice, first to him, and then to the Parish of Aberdeen, to appoint him to return to the Parish of Dyke again. As to himself, what a Hard-



Ship were it to appoint a Minister of so great Worth, after so solemn an Admission to a new Charge, to return back to his former Parish, where he labour'd under so great Discouragements, which, notwithstanding of former Promises to the Commission, when he was called to another Parish, were never yet redress'd ; but, on the contrary, have grown heavier since that Time ? And how unreasonable were it to appoint him to return to a Parish and Presbytery, which appear to be so much exasperated against him, for his Compliance with the Orders of the late Commission ; in which it cannot reasonably be expected, that his Ministry shall be of any further Use, whereof he himself, as I am inform'd, has the deepest and most affecting Apprehensions ?

As to the City of *Aberdeen*, and the Vacancy there, it were a manifest Hardship to remove Mr. *Chalmers* from them, they having so harmoniously cleaved to him since his Admission ; and being at so great an Uncertainty, considering the present Division in that Place, of having another fit Man settled amongst them, with any Harmony proportioned to that with which Mr. *Chalmers* doth now exercise his Ministry amongst them. So that to overturn his Settlement in the Town of *Aberdeen*, would be to overturn a Settlement made according to the Rules of this Church, and to do an Injustice

to the Town of *Aberdeen*, who have, by that Settlement, acquired a Right to him as their Minister; and to Mr. *Chalmers*, as being a forcing him back upon a Parish in which he has labour'd under so many Grievances, and who are now so highly discontented with him upon the Grounds just now mentioned. Would any Minister or Member of this venerable Assembly take it well to be sent back to his former Parish in such Circumstances?

I cannot, Sir, before I end, omit to take Notice, that the present Magistrates and Town-Council of *Aberdeen*, and their Adherents in Mr. *Chalmers's* Call, are a Set of Men who have appeared, upon all Occasions, for the Revolution-Interest, the Protestant Succession in His Majesty King *George*, and his Royal Family; and whose Zeal for the Welfare of this Church has supported our Constitution both in Church and State in the Northern Parts of this Country, even in the most dangerous Circumstances, and that in a very distinguishing Manner. How unreasonable then would it be for this General Assembly to discourage such a Set of Magistrates and their Friends, by annulling the late Settlement of Mr. *Chalmers* amongst them, as you, Sir, are pleased to propose, and so render the Planting of that Vacancy next to impracticable? Would not this be

to deprive the City of ~~Abberdeen~~ of the Labour of a Gospel-Minister well qualified for his Work, and to expose them to the Hazard of an uncertain Supply, and the Danger of Insults from their Enemies, both in the Neighbourhood and at a greater Distance?

There remains yet, Sir, an Objection which I hear is made against the Commission's determining finally in this Affair. But I persuade my self, that a Man of your Judgment cannot be imposed upon by such a sophistical Argument, seeing the Commission were impower'd by the last Assembly, their Constituents, to judge finally in this Affair, as it should come before them. When therefore the Commission has finally determin'd in the Question, their Sentence must needs be the Sentence of the Assembly itself; and therefore the Commission's Sentence in this Affair ought to be final: And indeed it can scarce be conceived, how the Sentence of a Commission acting within the Bounds of their Instructions can be reversed, according to the Rules of this Church. To depart from this Rule, would, in Effect, be to overturn our Constitution: Seeing, if the Commission's Sentence be not final in Matters referred to them, these behoved to return to the following Assembly; and so there must be either an endless Circle, or all Affairs of the Church must ly undetermined, unless



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Assembly meet every three Months. Being obliged to return to my Bear-feed, I am with all Respect,

SIR,

Your most obliged, and  
most humble Servant,

PHILADELPHUS

Edinburgh, May  
12th, 1726.

*P. S.* On the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, the  
General assembly disapproved of the  
Companion's proceeding in the settle-  
ment of Mr James Chalmers - particularly  
as not having been referred unto their



inclina-  
tions of the  
people of  
because of  
their too great  
presumption  
Presby and  
other vote  
the Assembly  
refused to re-  
ceive the Companion's sentence  
sitting Mr Chalmers at Aberdeen -  
to loose his relation to his charge in  
that town -



CM

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